

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

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FM AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2371

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMCONSUL LUANDA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LOURENCO MARQUES 0130

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, MZ

SUBJECT: GOVERNOR OF BEIRA'S DEPARTURE

REF: (A) LISBON 592 (NOTAL); (B) LOURENCO MARQUES 90;
(C) LOURENCO MARQUES 44

1. DURING RECENT VISIT TO BEIRA, I CONFIRMED THAT DISTRICT GOVERNOR COL. SOUSA TELES EXPECTED LEAVE AROUND MARCH 1. CONSENSUS IS THAT HE IS BEING DISMISSED BECAUSE OF HIS SHORTCOMINGS DURING LAST MONTH'S DEMONSTRATIONS IN BEIRA (REF C). ACCORDING TO LOCAL JOURNALIST, SOUSA TELES ALLOWED HIMSELF TO BE SHOUTED DOWN AND EVEN SHOVED AROUND BY BOTH DEMONSTRATORS AND MILITARY OFFICERS BEING DEMONSTRATED AGAINST, WAS UNABLE TO ASSERT CONTROL OVER EITHER SIDE, AND OCCASIONALLY GAVE VENT TO HIS FRUSTRATION BY BURSTING INTO TEARS.

2. OPINION IS MIXED ON MERITS OF DISMISSAL. SOME BUSINESS-MEN FEEL SOUSA TELES HAS PROVED POPULAR AND EFFECTIVE GOVERNOR FOR PAST SEVEN YEARS AND THAT MAKING HIM SCAPEGOAT FOR DISRUPTIONS WHICH WERE BASICALLY BEYOND HIS OR ANY OTHER SINGLE PERSON'S CONTROL IS GROSSLY UNFAIR. OTHERS FEEL HE HAS MADE MANY MISTAKES AND THAT HIS DEPARTURE IS LONG OVERDUE.

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EM SPEECH MENTIONED REFA PROBABLY REFERS TO SOUSA TELES' REMARKS AT MONTHLY SESSION OF DISTRICT COUNCIL IN EARLY FEBRUARY, MOST SIGNIFINANT PORTIONS OF WHICH WERE REPORTED REF ?. WHILE THESE REMARKS WERE SOMEWHAT MORE ALARMING THAN NORMAL PORTUGUESE OFFICIAL LINE, THEY WERE PROBABLY NOT ENOUGH IN THEMSELVES TO AFFECT TELES' STATUS, BUT COMBINED

WITH HIS UNSATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE DURING DEMONSTRATIONS MAY HAVE CLINCHED HIS REMOVAL.

4. COMMENT: I ALWAYS FOUND GOVERNOR SOUSA TELES TO BE HELPFUL, FRIENDLY, WILLING TO TALK FRANKLY. I HAD REGARDED HIM AS ONE OF THE MOST ENERGETIC AND PRESENTABLE OF THE DISTRICT GOVERNORS. IN LAST 6-8 MONTHS, HOWEVER, STRAIN WAS BEGINNING TO TELL. HE SOMETIMES DRANK A BIT TOO MUCH, HIS HANDS TREMBLED, HIS SKIN WAS FLUSHED AND HE SEEMED UNDER TENSION. TWO PERSONAL TRAGEDIES (FATAL ILLNESS OF A BROTHER AND SEVERE WOUNDS SUFFERED BY HIS SON WHILE SERVING WITH MILITARY IN NORTHERN MOZAMBIQUE) ADDED TO HEAVY LOAD HE WAS BEARING DUE TO THE DETERIORATION IN ECONOMIC AND MILITARY SITUATION. HE HAS HIS DETRACTORS BUT MOST PERSONS CONSIDER HIM EFFECTIVE, COMPETENT, LIKEABLE ADMINISTRATOR, AND REGRET HE SHOULD BE LEAVING UNDER A CLOUD.

VAN OSS

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